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the meaning 'jump.' Now a little later Peer says to his mother: *Heisan, hop!* *Vi skal lege Peer og bukke.* It would almost seem that Archer then understands the word *hop* to belong after *heisan* also in the first occurrence of the word and so translates 'jump' in both cases. Logeman renders the lines correctly; *heisan* is of course an exclamation of pleasure, (about 'hurrah'). As to the word *spare*, it means 'spare,' then 'save,' and finally 'get along without, do without.' Now Peer does not say 'spare' (as Archer); seven lines back he has suggested to his mother that she wait for him while he goes to hitch the horse to the cart. But as he is about to go Aase remarks that he may save himself this trouble, for the wedding is to be to-morrow. Then Peer's speech:

'Pyt; jeg kommer jo ikveld'
Heisan, moer, vi sparer kjærren,
det tar tid at hente mærren.

'Hurrah, mother, We'll do without the cart; it takes time to fetch the mare.' Prozor translates: *Je vais chercher la jument!*

But stranger mistakes are made elsewhere by the translators. Logeman notes a Dutch translation of the line: *Han bar hende, moer, som en bærer en gris by hij draagt haar als een beer een zwijn*, and the identical rendering in a German translation. The Com. often corrects translators errors of this kind, and here lies undoubtedly one of the chief values in the hands of the user of foreign versions of Ibsen. We can readily see that the French or Italian translator found much that was almost impossible to render by anything more than an approximation. But the English and the German student has the advantage of a much more kindred language, where identical or similar ways of expression are the rule, and the difficulties are far fewer. And yet translations in both languages have mistakes enough; the best translations of the one language are no better than the best in the other. But the mistakes are often of different kind, something that I shall deal with elsewhere.

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JOSEPH RITSON, *A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY*. By H. A. Burd. *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, Vol. II, No. 3.

An examination of Mr. Burd's biography of Joseph Ritson leaves one with a single regret,—namely, that the book received such hasty proof-reading. Typographical errors abound,—as "repentence" (p. 79), "meretorious" (p. 105, n. 51), "inconsequential" (p. 115), "Berners'" (p. 116), "Anthony á Wood" (p. 119), "chonicle" (p. 142); foot-note 21 on page 125 is misnumbered 22 in the text; quotation-marks are confused in the last line of the text on page 103; and there are various inconsistencies of punctuation,

as for example on page 118, where "Ancient Popular Poetry" is printed in quotation-marks instead of italics. More serious errors are on page 195, where a line is carelessly repeated by the printer, and on page 140, where part of a foot-note (itself a quotation containing unbracketed insertions by the author) is run into another quotation in the text on the following page.

There are a few minor editorial slips. Thus the date at which Ritson was appointed high bailiff is not consistently given (pp. 27, 51); the romance of *Horn Childe* is printed not in the second but in the third volume of Ritson's *Ancient Metrical Romances* (p. 136); and perhaps it is a bit misleading to name Rowley as a forger along with Chatterton and Ireland (p. 57). In commenting on the edition of Laurence Minot's poems, Mr. Burd (p. 116) remarks that "for some unexplained reason [Ritson] omits the fourth of the eleven poems—the only one of the group which lacks a descriptive couplet heading"; whereas actually Ritson did not omit this poem but printed it as a part of the third, numbering the following poem "IV."

Hasty proof-reading is also responsible for the general inaccuracy of the quotations. Evidently modernization, or normalization, of spelling and punctuation was not intended, and yet a collation of a dozen or two passages chosen at random shows that the author has inadvertently altered spelling, punctuation, and even words on no apparent plan. For example, Ritson's remark, "It run in my head that I was to give you forty pounds," appears (p. 39) as "It ran in my mind that I was to pay you forty pounds." A similar fault mars the Ritson bibliography, where in many cases Ritson's spelling and punctuation are but partly followed. The title of Ritson's edition of Minot's poems is given with slight inaccuracies both in the text and in the bibliography; part of the peculiar spelling of the title-page of the *Bibliographia Poetica* is retained, while the word "Engleish," a form of which Ritson was particularly fond, is modernized; and the long title given to *A Select Collection of English Songs* might well perplex a person who was endeavoring to procure a first edition of that work.

It would hardly be worth while to speak of such matters had not Ritson himself been so vociferous a stickler for accuracy even to the smallest details. For in most other respects the book is admirable. To previous biographical studies Mr. Burd has added various contemporary magazine notices and reviews, eight letters not before published, and comments from the correspondence of literary men of the time. But this is the slightest contribution of the monograph, the purpose of which, it is stated, is, "without overlooking the personal peculiarities, to bring Ritson into proper perspective and to estimate his importance in his own day and his influence upon the subsequent course of literature and criticism." That Mr. Burd has succeeded will be cordially admitted. The

judicial fairness with which he follows Ritson's vicious quarrels is as remarkable in a special study as it is commendable. Mr. Burd's sympathy with Ritson does not prevent his viewing that ungenerous and vindictive scholar with impartiality and stating his conclusions in a manner that carries conviction. To have in one book complete details about the inception and contents of Ritson's works, an account of their reception by the critics, and a carefully weighed estimate of their permanent contribution is highly desirable; and as a critical bibliography the volume will be welcomed by students of eighteenth-century literature.

In a sense, modern research begins with and is epitomized in Joseph Ritson. The son of a corn-grower, he received little formal schooling. About 1776 he left the Durham village of his birth and went to London, ostensibly to practise law. He became a constant reader at the British Museum, plunging into an eager study of old MSS., little-known books, and antiquarian material in general. An appointment as "High Bailiff of the Liberty of the Savoy" gave him an assured, if meagre, income, and, though he never gave up his profession as conveyancer, literary and antiquarian research was his chief occupation. Trips to the Bodleian and Cambridge libraries, loans of books from private collections and from such gentlemen as he could refrain from insulting, and persistent study in London enabled him to amass a quantity of information that even in this age of unrivaled helps is astonishing. In a period of twenty years he published thirty-six volumes and prepared for the press almost as many more, ten of which were printed after his death. About half of these were collections of English and Scottish ballads, songs, poems, and romances; others were treatises on law, critical remarks on Warton's *History* and on editions of Shakespeare, an essay on the moral duty of abstinence from animal food, and historical studies of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots. Among manuscripts lost or still unpublished were an English dictionary, a grammar, and a bibliography of Scottish poets.

Ritson was a self-made scholar. Only England could have produced him; and like most English scholars he had an enormous capacity for work, at which Americans can only marvel. To be sure, the mere compilation of facts was his highest ambition: he might have been a banner pupil of Mr. Gradgrind's school. Customarily he contented himself with arranging an immense number of examples or allusions in chronological order, trusting that his opponents (he always had opponents) would be overwhelmed by bulk rather than by a careful, methodical argument based on an analysis and assimilation of his material—a method which, though it represents the simplest form of research, has the great merit of giving one's work a degree of permanence otherwise hardly obtainable. In his quarrel with Percy about the minstrels,

Ritson ransacked the ages for examples to show the habitual degradation of minstrels and the utter impossibility of their having composed the songs which they sang. He had not the slightest comprehension of the justice of Percy's contentions, nor did he see that Percy's theory and illustrations supplemented his own. But although his essay, like Percy's, is out of date, the material which he collected (where it has not been appropriated outright by his successors) must still be consulted by the scholar. The same is true of his *Life of King Arthur*, with its pages and pages of unsifted and undigested citations; and truer still of his *Robin Hood*. Perhaps of all Ritson's work the notes and illustrations to the *Robin Hood* have best stood the test of time. The hundred and fifteen pages of allusions and examples there collected came near rendering superfluous all later investigations. They cannot to-day be neglected by students, although Ritson's own views of Robin Hood, as well as his edition of the ballads, are antiquated.

Almost as important is the *Bibliographia Poetica*, a register of all writers of non-dramatic poetry known to Ritson down to the end of the sixteenth century. The book abounds in errors of chronology as well as bibliography; there are noticeable omissions of authors; and names that have no possible right to a place in the work are included. Anne Askew and George Mannington, for example, duly appear as poets because ballads "made" by them were entered in the Stationers' Registers, though with his experience in ballad-collecting Ritson should have known that these ballads were "good-nights" foisted by professional rimesters on Anne and George after their execution. Emphasis, too, is woefully misplaced: Thomas Churchyard, vulgar rimer, and William Elderton, professional ballad-maker, each have three or four times as much space as nearly any other sixteenth-century writer. But as Ritson's chief concern was names, titles, and dates, and as he was a pioneer, the book hardly offered a field for unfavorable criticism. Almost worthless to-day, its influence on English bibliography was enormous. Joseph Haslewood, Sir Egerton Brydges, and Sir Frederick Madden made elaborate emendations, additions, and corrections in their copies (now in the Harvard College Library), a few of which were published; even J. P. Collier had some respect for the book, and he, Lowndes, Corser, and Hazlitt used it as a point of departure—or of attack—for their own manuals. Throughout the *Bibliographia* Ritson snarls and growls. A writer in *Censura Literaria* is "confident that in spite of all his grubbing he [Ritson] has left his book very imperfect. This might be excused by the nature of the undertaking, did he not call others 'fool and rascal' in every page."

His contemporaries had some admiration for his scholarship, but discounted the value of his work because of his virulent and incessant attacks on other writers. Ritson continued the tradi-

tions of the Renaissance scholars in -us, though he lacked their erudition. Hoping to build up his own reputation on the ruin of a rival's, he carried to completion most of his work rather to discomfit a person against whom he had a real or a fancied grudge than for the love of learning. In his editions of ballads and romances his purpose was largely to discredit the editorial methods of Pinkerton and Percy; his Shakespearean studies took the form of vicious attacks on what he was pleased to call the ignorance and stupidity of Malone and Steevens; his investigations in Scottish history and antiquities were made to confound a race of forgers extending from Hector Boethius to John Pinkerton; and his researches into English literary history blossomed into the venomous *Observations* on Warton's *English Poetry*. In the days of Erasmus and Scaliger, Harvey and Nashe, or Milton and Morus, Ritson would have been in high favor as a controversialist; but while the irascibility and abuse of these men was, so to speak, professional, Ritson's venom was personal and chronic. Ill-health, solitariness, and lack of proper nourishment from his queer diet undoubtedly increased his bitterness. Occasionally he did show signs of having a little of the milk of human kindness; but the eighteenth century, thanks to the example of Pope, was in general not distinguished for urbanity—even Dr. Johnson carried a club to chastise James Macpherson and to "correct" Samuel Foote. The word urbanity was not in Ritson's vocabulary. "What say you to my scurrilous libel against Tom Warton?" he gleefully asked a friend; and in the fits of raving that preceded his death he found consolation, not in the thought of his own good work, but in the belief that in his controversies 'with a great number of men of the first talents in the country, he had completely confuted them all.'

He quarreled with nearly everybody, often for the most trivial reasons. The break with Douce came towards the very end of Ritson's life, when he was preparing to publish the *Bibliographia*. A note in Madden's interleaved copy of that book declares:

Mr. Ritson was a *Vegetarian*, and quarrelled with Mr. Douce and struck out his name from the "Aduertisement" to the "Bibliographia," on the following trifling occasion. Ritson was sitting in Mr. Douce's house eating some bread and cheese for luncheon, when a little girl who was in the room, very innocently looked up in Ritson's face, and said "La! Mr. Ritson, what a quantity of mites you are eating!" Ritson absolutely trembled with passion—laid down his knife,—and abruptly quitted the room! On Mr. Douce following him, he said in a tone of excitement, "You have done this on purpose to insult me." The only answer Mr. Douce made was, "Sir, there is the door, and I never wish to see you again within it."

"I had this anecdote from Mr. Douce himself," Sir Frederick adds. The unpleasant reputation of the man has reacted on later scholars. There have been Percy and Warton and Malone societies, but, ironically enough, no one has thought of founding a Ritson Society.

Yet Ritson's abusive language served a purpose where milder words would have been ineffectual. It was the age of forgery,—the age of George Psalmanazar and Chatterton, of Macpherson, Pinkerton, and Ireland. Even Sir Walter Scott, in easy-going fashion, lacked conscience in giving the text of ballads, and may actually, so it is thought, have composed one of the ballads now in Mr. Child's collection. Since the days of Lady Wardlaw, to doctor ballads had been the usual course. Even Tyrwhitt's example of careful editing would perhaps have had no immediate effect. Ritson had a horror of forgers. Landing bludgeon blows right and left, he shouted forgery even where only laxity or carelessness was at fault. He scoffed at Ossian, frightened young Ireland out of his overweening self-confidence, forced a confession from Pinkerton, and goaded Percy into making changes in the *Reliques*. Sir Walter himself took pains to placate Ritson, feeling some apprehension lest his own editorial methods be publicly attacked. Fear of Ritson's caustic pen produced a very salutary effect on contemporary editors; and in almost every case time has shown the justice of his attacks, though his violent language is indefensible.

Perhaps Mr. Burd has done Ritson's critical powers more than justice. To assent to Ritson's condemnation of Lydgate as a "voluminous, prosaick, and driveling monk," whose works are not worth preserving (p. 134), may be conventional but is not fair. Much of Lydgate's verse hobbles on unscannable feet, but there is small logic in damning him only to assert, as Ritson does, that "in point of ease, harmony, and variety of versification, as well as general perspicuity of style, Laurence Minot is, perhaps, equal, if not superior, to any English poet before the sixteenth, or even, with very few exceptions, before the seventeenth century." Chaucer is not "excepted from all such comparisons" (p. 117), though he is excepted in regard to "creative imagination and poetical fancy;" and Ritson finds only two poets before 1600 worthy to be compared with Minot,—Robert of Brunne and Thomas Tusser! The early period at which Mannyng wrote has given him a vicarious immortality in our text-books, but the name of Tusser seldom adorns even those indispensable works unless it be to throw light on Udall's wielding of the cane. That Tusser's and Minot's rimes should be placed above the poems of Henryson, Wyatt, Surrey, Sackville, and Gascoigne (to mention no others) is damning evidence of Ritson's bad taste. Minot himself was a mere balladmonger, no part of whose work surpasses the street-songs of William Elderton. That Ritson admired Shakespeare was due, one suspects, to the temper of the age which, since the eulogy of Maurice Morgann, had veered towards that Romantic idolatry which still mars almost all criticism of Shakespeare. It would be idle to deny that Ritson appreciated the plays for the opportunities they afforded for textual emendation and annota-

tion; and it is to be hoped that Mr. Burd's excellent account of Ritson's Shakespearean criticism will restore to him the credit now given to the editors who have been 'beautified in his feathers.'

Ritson's objections to Percy's maltreatment of the Folio MS. were not those of modern ballad-enthusiasts. He was interested solely in the text as such. In spite of Mr. Burd's explanation (p. 156), most readers will still accept Professor Gummere's statement that Ritson preferred the ballads of Thomas Deloney to *Chevy Chase*. Nor is the distinction which Ritson is said to have made between ballad and song as important as many critics suppose. The haziness existing in his mind is sufficiently illustrated by his sneers at Martin Parker's *ballad* of *John and Joan* and his "particular pleasure" in publishing the "song" *When the King Enjoys His Own Again*, a *ballad* which Ritson did not know Parker to be the author of. Perhaps it was impossible adequately to define ballads before the broadside and "communal" types were categorized. The idea that Ritson had any glimmering of "communal" authorship is preposterous, and present-day English anti-communalists would, as Mr. Burd indicates, have had in him an obstreperous supporter.

Ritson is now remembered chiefly for his scholarly ideals of text-editing. Announcing the purpose of printing from a specifically designated text, and of recording in the margins every variation which a "disuse of contractions and a systematization of punctuation" rendered necessary in the eyes of ironical gentlemen of the eighteenth century, he resembled that Cantilenus who showed Johnson a copy of *The Children in the Woods* "which he firmly believed to be of the first edition, and by the help of which the text might be freed from several corruptions." In the *Ancient Songs* Ritson retained the Old English characters of some of his poems, thus almost equalling the modern pedantry which produces texts solely for scholars, ignoring more ordinary readers who otherwise might appreciate our early English texts. When his printers forced him to discontinue this practice, Ritson's reputation does not seem to have suffered. Editorial conscience has become more severe with the passing of years: Madden's copies of the *Ancient Songs* and *Ancient Popular Poetry* are literally covered with corrections or with further collations, though in general few errors of moment appear to have been found in any of Ritson's texts. His editions are, of course, antiquated; but his crusade for honesty and accuracy had an immediate effect for good, and his ideals were realized, some fifty years after his death, by the foundation of the Early English Text Society. Perhaps only special students of English literature know, or will know, Ritson. If there has ever been danger of underestimating his importance, Mr. Burd's book should prove to be a thorough corrective.

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